

# Japan Christian Activity News

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Shoji Tsutomu

## THE JOY OF SHARING SORROWS

The struggle for human rights and democracy in Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines has often been reported to us. Their struggles have been supported by people who share the tears and pain of the oppressed. Their joy was to share faith in Jesus, "a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief." The movement to share the pain of others as their own is deeply rooted in faith in Jesus, who took the pain of others as his own because of compassion. (Compassion is indicated as the motive for Jesus' healing in Matthew 9:36.)

Even though people in Japan have also suffered under oppressive rulers in the past, there were always those among them who had a supportive concern for others but that concern never extended beyond the boundary of the small village where they lived because they were not supposed to go outside their own limited circle.

A specific example of failure to show concern beyond one's own circle is seen in events related to the issuing of the "Buraku Emancipation Edict" in 1871. For over 300 years Buraku people (called eta) were viewed as a non-human class in society. When the Emancipation Edict came out the farmers opposed it by burning down "Buraku" communities and killing many with bamboo spears in their own village since the Burakumin were of the non-human class. Another example is the mass murder of Koreans when the earthquake hit the Kanto area in 1923. Citizens killed the Koreans (non-Japanese) in their own community as if they were responsible for the tragedy. The core of the problem of killing others is in the people's understanding of community life. The same sense of animosity to outsiders continues until today.

A man's loyalty is to his company. Two years ago a case of bribery was uncovered in a large company. During the police investigation an executive involved in the case killed himself in order to pro-

tect the company's secret from outsiders. His suicide letter proclaimed, "The company will last forever!" This may be an extreme case but it is clear that the ethics of group protection took precedence over the individual's life. This strong sense of group consciousness is frequently the cause of problems that Japanese companies have in their overseas operations.

The same problem is found in citizens' movements and other groups. There are many examples in which various groups are doing excellent work but find it difficult to cooperate even when working for the same cause. Some see this as the working of the emperor system in the heart of individuals - the emperor system seen as the village mind set, an inability to work outside one's own group.

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(The Joy of . . .)

The emperor system is supported by this village mind set. The destructive and inhumane power created when the emperor system was combined with military force is still fresh in our minds. There is a danger for the Japanese who have a tendency to think that the development of a group consciousness can become a kind of spiritual salvation. For example, loyalty to the company gives people security and the sense of belonging. A sense that the group (company) is the ethical basis for making decisions releases employees from emotional involvement as their companies exploit resources and people in other countries. Working for the company also gives them a purpose in life.

I believe that people have the ability to be concerned for others and to share each other's pain. I believe we are created to support each other. Without this quality, human beings cannot find proper meaning in life. However, in the Japanese situation, the love of one's neighbors has been changed to loyalty to the group, the company. I believe this is the root of our problems in society.

As the pressure for remilitarization increases, there are again voices calling for the recognition of the emperor as sovereign ruler of the nation instead of seeing him as a symbol of the nation. We must realize that this social trend will jeopardize human rights and peace movements based on the love of one's neighbors. We must take our position on the universal ethic of sharing the pain of the other as our own by overcoming Japanese group consciousness.

In the midst of changes in Japanese society, an important task for the NCC-J is the movement to oppose the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine. The Shrine had the role of combining the emperor system with Shinto worship and military power. When the nationalization of this shrine was proposed many Christians who advocated peace spoke out, especially the "Christian War Bereaved," while most other organizations of war bereaved spiritually endorsed war and supported the emperor's official participation at the shrine for the war dead (Yasukuni).

Standing on a more universal ethic, the "Christian War Bereaved" emphasize the

emperor's war responsibility and the need to overcome a narrow sense of group consciousness. This group confesses Japan's war responsibility in Asia. Because they understand their own sorrow as bereaved, they can pour out their love on other Asian people.

For Japanese, forging solidarity with others beyond their own group takes great courage. It cannot be done without the transformation of individuals. This can only be accomplished through encounter with Jesus--a man of sorrows and the determination to follow in his steps. #

SHOJI Tsutomu

### A SMALL TOWN DOCTOR'S STRUGGLES

"As a medical doctor and a minister I had the responsibility of caring for 30 Japanese being held as war criminals in Peking right after World War II. During that time I asked myself over and over about the emperor's war responsibility since we had been taught to obey the emperor as the Almighty. After the war everybody made excuses saying 'I was just following orders,' avoiding personal responsibility. We were avoiding responsibility for what we had done to our neighbors during the war." The above is part of Dr. Ogawa's testimony regarding his feeling of responsibility as a medical doctor drafted to serve with the military.

Over the last 25 years Dr. Ogawa has been serving as a doctor in the remote village of Shiroyama-cho, Hayama.

When maneuvers for the introduction into the Diet of the bill for the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine were taking place, Dr. Ogawa decided that he could not keep quiet with the excuse, "I'm a doctor." He felt his responsibility as a citizen was to oppose the bill.

The first article of the original Yasukuni Shrine Bill stated that the purpose of the Yasukuni Shrine was "to perform ceremonial rituals for the war dead whose lives were sacrificed for the country by commemorating what the heroes have done for the country and praising their greatness forever." It also stated that the Prime Minister shall

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*Small Town . . .)*

side the names of the war heroes to be ignored by enshrinement.

Before the bill was actually introduced, Mr. Ogawa and others formed the "Christian War Bereaved" organization. One act of the organization was a request made to the Shrine that the names of husbands or sons listed as deified, be removed from the rolls of Yasukuni Shrine. Dr. Ogawa said that the lesson that should be learned from the people who died in the war is that Japan should not again repeat the disaster of war instead of praising the war dead as heroes.

In response, the Shrine rejected the request saying that the purpose of the Shrine was determined on the order of Emperor Meiji and that the families of the war dead have nothing to do with the decision of who will be enshrined.

When the bill was officially presented for adoption by the Diet in 1970 the "Christian War Bereaved" again requested the Shrine authorities to remove the names of their war dead. This time the Shrine officials did not reply nor did they meet with the protesting family members.

After being presented to the Diet each year for five successive years, it was finally passed by the Lower House in 1974 by the unilateral vote of the Liberal Democratic Party. It did not pass in the Upper House. In the meantime Shrine officials discovered that if the bill were to become law the traditional Shinto rituals must be stopped because of the constitutional stipulation that religion and the state be separate. The Yasukuni Shrine would have to become a non-religious organization. The promoters of the Yasukuni Shrine bill joined the group that were seeking to change the constitution.

On August 15, 1975, the "Christian War Bereaved" organization made a policy statement growing out of their struggles.

1. We as victims of a cruel war forcefully reject any future war and pledge to support the present peace constitution with all our power.
2. We will never forget that our beloved ones were killed in a war started in the name of the emperor. We reject the emperor's participation in memorial ceremonies in

public honoring the war dead.

3. We are not just victims of war but have a responsibility as victimizers and confess our war responsibility to our neighbors in Asia.

In 1976 a rightist group was formed known as the "Honor the War Heroes" and they requested village and city councils to vote asking that the emperor, the cabinet, and national defense force leaders attend the Shrine's services in their official capacities. By most recent count 620 village and city councils have voted asking that the emperor, the cabinet, and national defense force leaders visit Yasukuni Shrine in their official capacity. This group, along with others, proposed that August 15, the day World War II ended, be set aside as the day for commemorating the war heroes.

Dr. Ogawa, in his testimony, concluded: "The purpose of the war was to kill our neighbors: specifically Chinese, Filipinos, and other Asian people. Our loved ones went out to kill and were killed. Those known as "War Bereaved" include not only Japanese. There are 20 million of them in all of Asia. We cannot talk about our sorrow by forgetting those whose hearts are also filled with tragic war memories."#

(The above was adapted from an article in the August, 1981, issue of Sekai, a secular magazine.)

#### YUWAKAI MEETS: BELIEF IN LOVE AND NON-VIOLENCE

With each day the news becomes more ominous: military "incidents," deadlier weapons, increased military spending, the magnification of "the enemy." Does anyone still believe in love and non-violence?

Apparently some people do. Sixty people attended the Yuwakai (Japan Fellowship of Reconciliation) 31st annual meeting, held in Nagano August 28-30. Yuwakai is a fellowship of Christians who affirm the principles of non-violence and their application to relationships between individuals, groups and nations.

#### HAM SOK-HON PARTICIPATES

For times like these the ideal speaker, planners proposed, would be the veteran Korean Quaker pacifist, HAM Sok-Hon,

(continued on p. 4)



(Belief in . . .)  
known for his life of non-violent resistance to oppression. But could he come? Not until three hours before his plane left Seoul was Ham's departure approved, but he arrived in time, and throughout the meeting, through a lecture and informal conversations, shared his insights from the Bible and his experiences.

In carrying on the work of reconciliation, for instance between Japan and Korea, Ham said that we must go higher and deeper than political or economic solutions. We should not be concerned with the past--it is already over. Our concern must be for tomorrow: what shall we do?

We must consider deeply the relationships between people, thinking about them from the standpoint of God's relationship and the present age.

Ham quoted a Lao Tzu poem familiar in the East which says that we may take various moves toward reconciliation, but we cannot say that real reconciliation has taken place as long as any vestige of hate remains in the heart.

Ham noted that the new commandment, "to love one another. . ." (John 13:34) was given after Judas had betrayed Jesus and at the point where the disciples' self-concern and distrust were destroying their corporate spirit. The new commandment became the seed of the future. Ham noted that the New Testament teaches "we shall sow, but another shall reap." We are to do what we can now, acting in love and witnessing to the truth but entrusting the harvest to God.

#### REMEMBER THE PEOPLE OF OKINAWA

The continued suffering of the Okinawan people was brought to the attention of those attending in two reports. Harold and Margaret Rickard, missionaries in Okayama, who worked in Okinawa from 1951 to 1963 and returned there recently to assess the situation, described the Okinawa they found in 1951: no trees, no birds, no songs, unexploded bombs on the shores, bitterness in the hearts of the people, who had lost one-third of their population in the final struggle between Japanese and American forces. Today, 30 years later--10 years after Okinawa's "reversion" to Japan--U.S. forces continue to occupy a large land area, the question of nuclear arms re-

mains unresolved, and now the Japanese Self-Defense Forces are there, too.

SEKINE Kenji, professor at Ryukyu University, represented Okinawan Yuwakai members. He described how U.S. bases affect the daily lives of the Okinawan people--the constant fear of attack because of being the "keystone" of U.S. military presence in the Pacific: the noise, nuisance and danger of firing practice, hovering helicopters, the coming and going of giant planes; the discrepancies between the legal system for the U.S. bases and that for the rest of Okinawa. Okinawans continue to protest non-violently by withholding the portion of their taxes going to defense, challenging the existence of two legal codes and recording the deep feelings of the Okinawan people toward the military and the war.

On Saturday morning, special study-discussion sessions were held on the issues of education, nuclear power and the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine.

#### LDP PURSUES CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION

In a general lecture Saturday afternoon, Constitution scholar SASAGAWA Norikatsu, professor of Hokusei Gakuin University, detailed the efforts of the Liberal Democratic Party to revise the present Constitution. He identified the major objectives as: 1) expanding the role of the emperor and separating him from the people; and 2) replacing Article 9, which renounces the use of force, with provisions for military forces.

A dramatic slide presentation based on photographs and clippings showed how the government is rallying the constituencies of local shrines to call for the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine. Also, Boy Scouts, community cultural groups, tourists, survivors of military personnel all are being drawn into Shinto celebrations exalting the state.

Specific directions and actions approved by Yuwakai members included:

- 1) sending several Yuwakai members to the meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations to be held in conjunction with the 2nd United Nations Special General Assembly on Disarmament in New York in 1982;
- 2) urging Prime Minister SUZUKI to attend the Disarmament Conference



(Yuwakai Meets . . .)

3) expressing to Soviet Prime Minister Leonid BREZHNEV and U.S. President Ronald REAGAN deep concern over the escalation of armaments and asking them to work instead for the reduction of tensions. #

Helen Post

## RURAL EVANGELISM AS COMPROMISE

When I was a pastor in the city I could not understand why Japan was so conservative; many complained about the ruling political party yet every time there was an election the Liberal Democratic Party received a majority of seats in the Diet. But after 18 years as pastor in the country I can see the reason. The majority of politicians are elected by the rural constituency - not by the urban people whom I had known in the city. Unless the voice of the village people is changed our society will never change.

The village people knew that I had come from outside because of the way I spoke Japanese and because of my name. I moved to the village and put up a large sign in front of the church which said "Oppose the Nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine." One day I saw a group of older people talking about the sign and indicating their disagreement. Though I expected some kind of persecution there was none. My voice was much like the voice of a frog in a rice paddy in that absolutely nobody listened to me.

I took down the sign, attended village meetings, and ate and dance with the villagers. I enrolled in "karate" classes and continued even though I broke several ribs. I donated some money for the village shrine celebration and even let my son beat the drum in the parade. One day I asked a shrine priest about the Yasukuni Shrine issue. He replied, "I have some questions about the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine. The intention of those seeking nationalization can be clearly seen." As the conversation continued it sounded as if the shrine priest rejected the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine while it seemed that I supported nationalization.

After the village celebration a group of young people came to my door. "We didn't think it was a good idea to take a dona-

tion from Christians. We added some of our own money to the amount left over from the celebration and want to make a contribution to 'Tsukushi no Ie' - an institution for the handicapped operated by the church."

As suggested in the Parable of the Sower, good soil is needed for good fruit. A minister in an urban setting thinks of the role of the pastor as being a sower of the seed. Some believe that if the seed itself is good, a fine harvest will be produced.

But the soil is also very important, and making good soil takes many years. We frequently talk about the importance of a great harvest, but not about making the soil rich. To the people who talk about nothing but the harvest, country pastors do not appear to be capable of doing a good job. Every day I am busy trying to make the soil better. I talked about my rural work at a seminary alumni meeting. The young students at seminary did not understand me because their minds were like business men very much concerned with the financial balance sheet while my mind worked like a farmer's mind.

My experience in the farming community is that making good soil starts in compromising with others. In a small town everybody knows everybody else. No matter how much disagreement there is with other the individual usually is not able to move away from where they were born and grew up. One person said to me that she envies me because I can always move.

Recently I heard some people saying, "We must listen to the pastor." Now I compromise about 80 percent of the time in order to have results the remaining 20 percent of the time. #

Rev. MIYAJIMA Shinya from  
FUKUIN TO SEKAI Aug. 1981

## A T T E N T I O N:

An English language slide set with a cassette tape music and voice narration sound track entitled "The Face of the Waters" is now available along with related script from the office of the NCCJ. The set presents environmental consequences of atomic power as seen from a Christian perspective. For sale or a rent,



## Bott Memorial Children's Home

--a personal report by Claudia GENUNG

I came to Japan from the U.S. for the first time in September, 1976, living with a Japanese family as an International Christian Youth Exchange (ICYE) student. I participated in many activities--I did volunteer work in a center for the handicapped, worked on a dairy farm, taught children at a Korean YMCA, attended Amnesty International meetings, and studied Japanese.

Since ICYE is an organization which emphasizes social-issues, I became aware of some of Japan's social issues as well as some of the social problems in neighboring Asian countries. My friendships with many missionaries, as well as with Japanese Christians, strengthened and encouraged me to stay on in Japan for another year as a student in the International Studies Program of the University of the Pacific (UOP) in its overseas program.

As I look back now I clearly see that God was preparing me for work in Social Services. As my studies had a strong emphasis on Japan, I was glad to have an opportunity to live in Kyoto with a Japanese family.

The next phase of my UOP year was an internship in a Buddhist children's home in Tokyo. The last phase of my student overseas program was studying at Aoyama University and living with an Indonesian-Japanese couple.

After returning to the U.S. and graduating from the University of the Pacific, I applied through the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church to return to Japan as a missionary. The Japan Christian Social Work League accepted me through the United Methodist Church to work as a Missionary Associate at the Bott Memorial Children's Home just outside of Tokyo.

The Bott Memorial Children's Home provides a home for thirty-six boys and girls from two to eighteen years of age. These children have lost their parents and homes due to various unhappy circumstances. The staff is made up of Christians whose purpose is to build a

strong foundation of Christian faith within the Home. The Director, Mr. HIRAMOTO Zenichi is a source of strength for all of us. Though the hours are from 6 a.m. to 9 or 10 p.m., I find the fellowship with the other workers very important, as we work together and pray together each morning for the children and our work.

When I first came to the Home I was disappointed. Working in a children's home is not as glamorous as one might think since the work is composed of routine, everyday jobs like seeing that the children eat their meals properly, (making sure the soup goes into their mouths and not down the front of their clothes.) wiping their noses, bathing the little ones, and house-cleaning. I help tutor elementary and junior high school children along-side university students two hours a day twice a week. We also have an English Club at the Home for the children that are interested in learning English.

I believe that all the students have their own potential and can do well in spite of being "institutional kids." While these mundane tasks are essential, they are a far cry from the flamboyant dreams I had of being a missionary. Yet in no work does example play such an important role as it does in teaching the love of Christ to children.

Occasionally I have done some of the public relations work of the Bott Memorial Children's Home such as writing an English pamphlet telling about the Home and speaking at the International Ladies Benevolent Society held at the U.S. Ambassador's residence. While in the U.S. for three weeks this summer, I talked and showed my slides to people from five United Methodist Churches in the Bay area of San Francisco, and also to the Youth Group of my own church.

I have had the opportunity to attend missionary conferences, social work seminars, and an Asian Christian Social Work Consultation which included participants from Hong Kong, Korea, and Japan. This variety helps me as it broadens my outlook and is important in learning about what is going on with others in the Christian community, in the area of social work, and in the world. I am helping, as an English teacher, with



the coming International Abilympics ("Ability" and Olympics" --an international disabled persons vocational skills display,) to be held in Tokyo from October 19-23.

I have learned so much from the children at the Home and I hope they will also learn from having someone from another country with a slightly different outlook working with them. #

#### HANDICAPPED GROUP TO VISIT MANILA, HONG KONG AND SINGAPORE

Twenty handicapped persons from all over Japan, accompanied by Agape personnel, will tour the Asian cities of Manila, Hong Kong and Singapore from November 7-15. The group will be made up of approximately 1/3 deaf, 1/3 blind, and 1/3 in wheelchairs. They will visit institutions, met with other handicapped persons, and present goodwill gifts of wheelchairs and brail writing materials. Agape, related to Church World Service, is a center for the vocational rehabilitation of handicapped persons teaching mainly industrial skills so that the handicapped may become self-sufficient and join the mainstream of society. Agape, located in the city of Zama, Kanazawa, is lead by Rev. BUMA Kentaro.

I was asked to give an introductory talk on basic facts about the Philippines. The talk was translated from English to Japanese and then by sign language. Slides were shown of the abundant, rich natural resources of the Philippines, the modern buildings and shopping centers of Manila and Makati, inter-juxtaposed with faces of poverty--rice farmer, sugarcane workers and the slums.

Handicapped persons in Asia are very much neglected, hidden or end up on the streets as beggars. The participants asked what they can do to be of real help and to reach out a hand to fellow-handicapped persons in Asia.

In Tokyo the streets have special cobbled yellow sections on the streets and sidewalks to aid the blind. Some pedestal crossings have music played when the light turns green. As I discovered more about the situation in Japan, I realized that my knowledge of the handicapped is very limited and was not able to give a knowledgeable talk on the situation of the handicapped in the Philippines. About all I could remember was a well known blind

man on a busy street intersection in Manila who brought joyful tunes to pedestrians by playing his harmonica all day. Handicapped persons need to feel their own worth--that they can still make a useful contribution to society.

As handicapped persons come out and join the world they call attention to their plight and point to the need for their equal rights to a job, and better access to public facilities. #

Merceditas Cruz

#### BURAKU ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEAGUE SEEKS INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

"We are concerned that Christ become incarnate in our society by identifying ourselves with the oppressed." These words express the motive behind the NCCJ's cooperation with the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) Buraku Liberation Center (Shijonowate City, Osaka) in securing signatures to a request to Japan's prime minister asking for an extension of the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects. The present law is due to expire March, 1982.

The Dowa Projects Law was enacted to seek to correct over 400 years of oppression against the Burakumin. The Burakumin, who number about 3million persons live in 6000 segregated communities in Japan and are subjected to various kinds of discrimination including employment, marriage, and education.

Various Christian organizations throughout the world were written by SHOJI Tsutomu, General Secretary, NCCJ, asking them to sign a petition to the Prime Minister asking that the present law be extended and strengthened.

Rev. SHOJI's letter pointed out that the petition asks for legislation that will help secure what is guaranteed by the constitution of Japan.

The various organizations were asked to respond by the end of September. #

#### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION'S NEW ORDER

On Sept. 9, the Ministry of Education reversed its earlier order by authorizing the inclusion in textbooks of the names of companies that had caused pollution.

(See August 20, JCAN)



## FELLOWSHIP TIME AT ARI

Asian Rural Institute students in Nishi Nasuno, Japan were happy to welcome ten women visitors from the Japan Baptist Union on September 3. Each of the 28 students received a new hand-made cotton kimono (Yukata) and a belt from the women. 36 "Yukata" were prepared this year and taken for the ARI students. The students had a lively time choosing one which they liked best. The women in turn were impressed with the differences in taste and pattern preferences of the Asian students. The students learned how to put the Japanese kimono on as the women adjusted them and made the final handsewn touches.

The fellowship continued with a dance before the students went back to their work. This was the third year that this project has been carried out by the women's association of the Japan Baptist Union. Asian Rural Institute, Rev. Tom TAKAMI director, provides a year long program for training leaders of rural communities from Asian and African countries. #

## INDIGENIZATION AND CEMETARIES

The "Kirisuto Shinbun" (Sept. 12) had a special on the need for church cemeteries. The newspaper survey indicates that 100 congregations of the 900 (63 R.C., 837 Protestant) chosen randomly were polled concerning church cemeteries. 83 churches responded. 48 churches (57.9%) indicated that they do not have their own cemetery, but 33 of those 48 churches said that they have a connection with a denominational cemetery or a cemetery held in common with other churches. 15 churches indicated that they do not have any burial space. Most of the congregations without a cemetery are new churches and have not yet considered the necessity of having a cemetery.

In Japanese tradition the body of the dead is very important to the family. Early Japanese Protestants had a difficult time finding a place to bury their dead since in feudal Japan everybody was buried within the parish of a Buddhist temple. In 1874, a year after the government repealed the law prohibiting Christianity in Japan, public cemeteries were permitted.

On Tokyo's Yamate rail line, between Uguisudani and Nippori stations, many tombs with crosses are separated from the main part of the cemetery. Until 30 years ago the section with crosses was

known as the Christian (Yaso) cemetery. Rev. KATO Tsuneaki (pastor and professor of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary) proposed that for the indigenization of Christianity in Japan churches need a cemetery and suggested that church anniversary be a time for receiving funds for cemetery construction. The construction of facilities to take care of the church's dead would cost from ¥400,000 to ¥6,500,000.

A church cemetery would give families a connection to the church at the time of death making people feel closer to the church and strengthening the families' tie with the church. #

## ANNOUNCEMENT:

### Nuclear Issues Seminar at Yokosuka

The NCC Nuclear Issues Committee is seeking concerned Christians to participate in a seminar concerned with nuclear issues--both military and nuclear waste disposal. The seminar will be held at the Yokosuka Ogawacho Church (Kyodan) from 7:00 PM October 9 to 5:00 PM October 10.

The program includes a boat observation tour of the U.S. naval base at Yokosuka and dialogue with a delegate from Pacific Islands near where Japan dumps nuclear waste. For further information please contact Rev. Kazaki, NCCJ.

### KAGAWA TOYOHICO RESOURCE CENTER

Plans for the building of a resource center to commemorate the work of Rev. KAGAWA Toyohiko, Japan's famous evangelist and social worker, started in October 1977. The resource center, which will house many resources related to Kagawa's work in Kobe and Tokyo, will be housed at the center. Construction cost will be ¥360,000,000.

Both construction and operating costs will come from individual donations. In order to receive permission that contributions to the center be tax deductible, the legal name of the Kagawa Memorial is to be called "Matsuzawa Resource Center." Matsuzawa is the name of the place in Tokyo Kagawa lived after the Kanto great earthquake in 1923.

The center will be completed at the end of March, 1982. #